

**GOSPORT AND ALVERSTOKE
DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

E. J. HUNTER, L.R.C.P.E., ETC.,

For the Year 1898.

Printer: F. PARKER, 55, Forton Road, Gosport.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
OF THE
Gosport and Alverstoke District
FOR 1898.

GENTLEMEN,

GOSPORT,
February, 1899.

I have the honour to lay before you my Annual Report for 1898 on the Health and Sanitary condition of the District generally. The usual tabulated Schedules of Deaths, Births, and notifications of Infectious Diseases are appended, and a careful study of these figures will tend to show that the record for the year is extremely satisfactory.

The benefits arising from the notification of Diseases Act are most marked, and with the improvements made in the dwellings of the poorer classes, it is to be hoped that the health of the town will continue to improve, and the District be recognised as one of the healthiest in the kingdom.

STATISTICS.

The Births during the year registered 835, showing an increase of 96 over 1897. With the exception of 1889, this is the highest birth rate ever recorded in the District.

The following table shows Births and Deaths recorded during each month of the year :—

Month	Births		Deaths	
	Males	Females	Whole District	District Proper
January ...	42	49	57	52
February ...	30	32	36	34
March ...	40	38	37	30
April ...	36	41	25	19
May ...	32	21	40	28
June ...	44	32	35	27
July ...	36	27	31	25
August ...	30	28	48	39
September ...	32	37	44	39
October ...	40	31	49	41
November ...	40	30	28	21
December ...	32	35	49	40
Totals ...	434	401	479	395

The death rate of 479 for the whole district which includes the whole of the Naval and Military Establishments, is 19 below that of 1897, or 17·10 per 1,000 as against 18·01, whilst amongst the inhabitants proper, the annual average works out at 16·45 per 1,000 as against 17·10 for 1897.

The death rate was highest during January, the increase being due to diseases of the respiratory organs. Diarrhœa was not nearly so prevalent as in 1897, and measles did not produce one single death.

I have referred in my previous reports to the abnormal percentage of deaths which occur under one year, and I regret to find the figures for 1898 have increased over that of 1897 by 22, the total for the year being 134. This brings the average rate for 1,000 births registered to 160·5, which means that out of every 6 children born, one dies within the twelve month. This is a very serious matter requiring the most earnest consideration.

As in previous reports I append the following tables covering a period of 11 years :—

Year	Births	Deaths		Rate of Mortality per 1000		Estimated Population
		Whole District	District Proper	Whole District	District Proper	
1888	810	469	385	21·81	21·27	21,500
1889	836	482	406	22·41	22·43	„
1890	796	486	394	22·6	21·76	„
1891	809	454	364	17·87	16·93	25,500
1892	754	549	433	21·52	20·14	„
1893	765	540	451	21·17	20·97	„
1894	775	417	327	16·35	15·21	„
1895	790	509	413	19·2	18·35	26,500
1896	822	487	399	18·03	17·35	27,000
1897	739	498	402	18·01	17·10	27,500
1898	835	479	395	17·10	16·45	28,000
Totals	8731	5370	4369	19·64	18·9	

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

In my Report for 1897 I anticipated that there would be a considerable decrease in the notifiable diseases, and such would have undoubtedly been the case,

but for a sudden outbreak of Scarlatina during the last six weeks of the year. The disease originated in the Forton District and rapidly spread, so much so, that during the period mentioned, 69 notifications were received from that district, the majority of cases being in the locality of the Royal Marine Barracks. It seemed to be difficult to define its introduction into the neighbourhood, but I subsequently ascertained that there had been a case in the Admiralty Quarters, in an officer's family, and I strongly suspect that the outbreak had its origin there. Quite a month elapsed before I heard anything of this case and even then the knowledge was only gained indirectly. I immediately placed myself in communication with the Commanding Officer, who informed me that all necessary precautions had been taken to prevent infection. No co-operative aid was however rendered me by the Naval Medical Officer in charge of the case. Recognising the fact that the population of Gosport and Alverstoke consists of a large number of men of both services inter-mixing with our civil population, it is absolutely essential for the benefit of the whole community, that *all* cases of the notifiable class should be notified to the District Medical Officer of Health.

I would strongly suggest the advisability and desirability of laying this important matter before the Local Government Board with a view to obtaining the assistance of the Admiralty in bringing about that co-operation so urgently needed.

I acknowledge my indebtedness to the Officers Commanding and other Officers of the R.A.M.C. for their assistance in the cases coming under their notice, and also to my civilian confrères who have rendered me also material aid.

It is only by this friendly co-operation that remedial measures can be taken to prevent dissemination of this dangerous infectious disease. Unfortunately for the district at the time of the outbreak there were no means of perfect isolation nor means for disinfection of clothing, the result being that in most cases the disease ran through the house. This was most unfortunate for the breadwinners, as most of them were engaged in Government Establishments, and as a consequence either had to refrain from entering their houses, or were debarred from following their employment during the full period of five or six weeks, with an income considerably reduced at a time when nourishment for the sick was urgently required.

The Town and South Wards have fortunately thus far escaped, there being only 4 in the former and 6 in the latter.

The Gosport or Town Ward still remains very free from infectious diseases, only 24 being registered out of 171 for the whole district.

The South Ward also shows improvement there being only 38 this year as against 82 in 1897.

The following table presents concisely the notifications for the year and their localities :—

Ward.	Diphtheria	Scarlet Fever	Enteric Fever	Contd. Fever	Erysipelas	Total
Gosport ...	3	4	15		2	24
South Liberty	8	6	10		14	38
North Liberty	12	69	17	3	8	109
Total ...	23	79	42	3	24	171

The deaths from notifiable diseases numbered 18, the mortality rate being .64 per 1,000. There were 2 deaths from Scarlet Fever, 6 from Diphtheria, 8 from Enteric, 1 Continued Fever, and 1 from Erysipelas.

ENTERIC FEVER.

This disease appears to have been equally distributed in the Wards, there being 44 cases as against 31 in 1897. In nearly one-half of these cases the drainage and sanitary arrangements were found to be very defective, and I am convinced that were more care evinced in seeing that the pail-closet was kept thoroughly cleansed, and that either ashes or earth were utilized, there would be a considerable reduction

under this important heading. The infection from this disease lies mainly in the excreta. In the case of convalescent patients, insufficient care is bestowed in this matter. The germs of disease lie dormant a long period, only to spring into life when least expected. I am of opinion that one pail should be used by the patient only, for a considerable time after convalescence. Again, there arises another source of infection,—the clothes of the patient are washed, and the water thrown upon the garden, probably where vegetables are cultivated. The provision of a Disinfector will completely remedy this evil. I have seen on my visits the linen used in Enteric cases being washed in a scullery or kitchen combined, where food has been kept, and by this means the seeds have often been germinated.

Then again, I am afraid the disinfectants used by householders are not of that character required to destroy the poison, and more than this, I am afraid that though disinfectants are supplied, they are not used as they should be. Of course in the use of stronger disinfectants, great care is necessary and should be entrusted only to responsible persons; the excreta should be thoroughly destroyed by perchloride of mercury or burnt before being put into the ground, otherwise the danger of percolation will arise as the germs remain active for a long time even when buried.

But besides these dangers which I have pointed out, there are others, *e.g.*,—the secretions of the skin, or of the urine. This I have no doubt accounts for some of the cases which arise concurrently in the same house.

I strongly recommend the issue of leaflets to householders bearing not only upon this important matter, but with infectious diseases generally. No harm can arise, much good may result, and the expense would be trifling in the circulation of these leaflets.

I would like to suggest further that all receptacles containing filth, rubbish, or refuse, should be covered; this suggestion applying, as far as possible, also to the carts used in removing same, so that germs may be prevented from being carried away in all directions by the winds as is the case now.

Milk may possibly be a means of contamination, as a large quantity is brought in from other districts, and unless a bacteriological examination (a costly process) is made it is impossible to say whether the milk contains germs or not.

As far as the water of the District is concerned, no suspicion arises in my mind as to contamination, knowing that from the frequent analyses made by Dr.

Thresh, a water analyst of the highest repute, there is absolute freedom from contamination of organic matter.

MEASLES.

Under this heading not one death has been registered, the district enjoying almost complete immunity from the disease, a pleasing contrast to 1897, when 15 deaths were registered.

DIPHTHERIA.

Six deaths were due to this disease as compared with seven the year previous.

INFLUENZA.

Seven deaths were recorded against 1 in 1897.

ERYSIPELAS AND WHOOPING COUGH.

One death occurred from the former and five from the latter, four of whom were children under five years of age.

BRONCHITIS, PNEUMONIA AND PLEURISY.

There were 73 deaths due to these diseases, the majority being in the month of January, when the mortality rate for the year was highest. The figures for the last seven years are as follows : 72, 131, 107, 74, 84, 68, 59, and 73 respectively.

DIARRHŒA AND DYSENTERY.

Under this heading there were 22 deaths, a most satisfactory decrease from last year. Of this number 21 were under 5 years of age, the mortality still being almost entirely confined to infants. I still am of opinion that improper feeding is the most important factor with which we have to contend in dealing with this disease. Unhealthy surroundings undoubtedly contribute materially to the spreading of the disease, and therefore, though I am pleased to say a great deal has been done in this direction, there still remain insanitary areas requiring the attention of

the Sanitary Committee. During summer and autumn a most stringent observation should be kept upon fish, fruit, &c., exposed for sale, especially that of itinerant vendors.

HEART DISEASE.

A slight increase is noticeable under this heading, the deaths numbering 37 as against 34.

SMALL POX.

Fortunately the District has been free from this most loathsome and fatal disease, but how long it may continue it is impossible to say now that the law affecting Vaccination has been so seriously altered, especially as regards what are termed Conscientious Objectors.

To my mind this is a most fatal mistake, and it is to be hoped that those who have availed themselves of this serious loophole will soon see the error into which they have fallen, and embrace the opportunity of being vaccinated either by their own medical practitioners or by the Public Vaccinator.

There can be no excuse made now as regards bad lymph being impregnated into the system, when every facility is offered of vaccination being carried out at home free of charge, the lymph used being glycerinated calf lymph supplied by the Local Government Board.

As a thorough protection, so that vaccination may be efficient and trustworthy, it is necessary that every patient should be vaccinated in four places. There is not the slightest doubt that carried out in this way absolute immunity may almost be expected, or at least only a very modified form of disease.

I hold strongly that the practice of vaccinating in one place only cannot be too strongly discountenanced.

Then again, I would strongly urge the necessity of revaccination.

If this terrible disease should break out in this neighbourhood every one over the age of 10 should without a doubt be revaccinated.

But we should not even wait for an outbreak. As a precautionary measure every one should consult his or her medical practitioner or the Public Vaccinator at the present time and undergo the simple operation.

One cannot be too careful in contending with this vile disease which is so terrible in its effects, not only as regards disfigurement, but also as regards the complications which follow and from which recovery is almost impossible.

The immunity which exists among re-vaccinated nurses at Small Pox Hospitals is a notable proof of the protection re-vaccination affords.

PHTHISIS OR CONSUMPTION.

There were 43 deaths from this disease, the number being the same as in the preceding year. Of this number 19 occurred at the Naval and Military Establishments. In the District proper there were 22 deaths—one being under 5 years of age, and 2 deaths were recorded at the House of Industry.

In a considerable number of cases the cause is traceable to maladies contracted whilst on foreign service.

Tuberculosis is now recognised as a preventible disease, and although it would be premature to class this among the notifiable diseases, still the public should know what precautions are necessary to avoid exposure to its influence.

In my opinion, whenever a death occurs from Phthisis or Tuberculosis, or even I would go so far as to say where one suffering from the disease has resided, the house should be disinfected as well as all articles of clothing or bedding capable of retaining infection.

In Common Lodging Houses I should prefer that the floors were covered with sawdust rather than sand, as the sputa from infected persons is more easily absorbed and readily burnt, whereas with sand it is thrown away, from whence it is carried in minute particles by the wind in all directions—a source of danger to all coming within contact with it.

The measures so strongly advocated by the Chairman, Mr. Cooke, now being taken by the Council—of clearing the confined areas—is a step in the right direction, and will do much to retard the progress of this dread disease.

One great source of danger, which is common to all, is our milk supply. Milk obtained from tuberculous cows is greatly the cause of consumption of the bowels, and when we remember that milk is the essential food of all infants brought up artificially, it becomes more necessary than ever that a close watch should be kept upon the milk producers.

All milch cows should be kept as much as possible in the open, and only taken to their byres to be milked.

In the event of any one of them known to be suffering from tuberculosis, a canvas screen should be fixed separating the sick from the healthy, so that there may be no contact by coughing or otherwise. This would tend to stay the spread of the disease.

Again, the cubic space of air should be increased to 800 cubic feet, and the byres provided with more light and ventilation.

The granting of Licenses to Dairymen is a matter requiring the utmost consideration. A careful examination of all the surroundings should be made before granting the licence, and enquiries should be made as to where grazing takes place. Plenty of pure air is as essential to cows as to human beings, and in thus studying the interests of the one we are laying the foundation of a great benefit for humanity.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

The munificent gift to the parish by Mr. Thomas Naish Blake referred to in my last report is now an accomplished fact. The buildings are completed and have been handed over to the Council.

Mr. Blake is certainly to be congratulated upon the very handsome and useful building he has presented to the inhabitants of the District, who I trust will soon learn to appreciate the institution placed in their midst, and ever feel grateful to the generous donor for his gift.

May we hope that this excellent example may lead others who have the interests of the poor and suffering at heart, to take such steps as will lead to the establishment of a Cottage Hospital in our midst.

The thanks of the community are due to the Chairman of the Council, Mr. Cooke; the Chairman of the Isolation Hospital Committee, Dr. Kealy; and all the members of the Committee and Staff for their assiduous endeavours to have the hospital ready for patients at the earliest possible date.

SCAVENGING, &c.

This work naturally increases with the growth of population, and during the past year it has been found necessary to put on an extra man and horse for night work. Six are now constantly engaged.

I should like to see other means used in the emptying of cesspits. Deodorizing the contents of the cesspit and then pumping the whole through a hose would prevent the splashing and spilling of all obnoxious matter which I regret to say is too frequently noticed. Besides the continued traffic to and fro in emptying the utensils would be avoided.

In the matter of house refuse, to which I have already referred, I should like to see an improvement in the receptacles used by householders for containing refuse.

The number of Earth Closets have greatly increased, there being now over 3,000, and owing to the scattered nature of the houses of the District the haulage labour has considerably increased. Additional attention has been paid to the scavenging of streets and flushing of gutters, it being desirable to get rid of all foul matter as quickly as possible.

When the crowded nature of some parts of the district is considered in connection with the proximity of untanked cesspools and great pollution of subsoil, I cannot but urge the necessity of a Sewage Scheme being provided. In some cases the back gardens become surcharged with waste and foul waters which the emptying of cesspits does not remedy.

IMPROVEMENTS IN 1898.

A new and improved Urinal, with automatic supply, has been placed at Ann's Hill.

A Drinking Fountain, for the use of the public at Stokes' Bay, has been much appreciated by the thousands of people visiting the bay during the summer months.

A new Horse and Cattle Trough has also been fixed in Mumby Road, near Gosport Station.

ROUTINE WORK.

Accompanied by the Inspector I have made frequent inspections of the District, especially respecting matters coming under the Housing of the Working Classes.

WATER SUPPLY.

The Water Supply has been continuous, and the analyses, both chemical and bacteriological, of the new supply at Foxbury prove the water to be of the highest degree of purity. The thanks of the community are due to Mr. Cooke, the Chairman of the Council, for the trouble he has taken in this matter.

ADDITIONS DURING THE YEAR.

One hundred and fifty-one new houses, 1 factory, 2 bakehouses, 1 schoolroom, and one laundry have been erected within the District, and plans have been submitted for 4 new publichouses.

The usual Tabular Statements are appended, together with a Statement of Deaths during the year, according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient Servant,

EDWIN JOHN HUNTER, L.R.C.P.E.,

(Fellow Royal Institute Public Health, Member of Sanitary Institute, &c.),

Medical Officer of Health,

Gosport & Alverstoke District.

To the CHAIRMAN and MEMBERS

Of the Gosport & Alverstoke Urban District Council.

NOTICES SERVED TO ABATE NUISANCES.

New Drainage provided, Drainage reconstructed, trapped, and ventilated (including new drains and water-closets at Russell Street, Forton). ...	...	...	...	...	76
Cesspools emptied and Drains cleared	...	...	...	...	76
Cesspit overflows, disconnected from Drain	...	...	...	...	15
New Water Closets provided	...	...	...	...	16
Cesspits dispensed with and Ash-Closet System adopted	...	...	...	...	17
Cesspits emptied and repaired	...	...	...	...	42
Pig Dung and Manure removed	...	...	...	...	7
Paving of Yards repaired ...	...	...	...	...	31
Drains opened up for Inspection	...	...	...	...	3
House Refuse and Filth removed	...	...	...	...	26
Ash-Closet Receptacles renewed	...	...	...	...	12
Blood Heap deodorised	...	...	...	...	1
Water Courses cleansed	...	...	...	...	2
Well closed, as proved polluted	...	...	...	...	1
Water in Cellar removed and Cellar filled in	...	...	...	...	1
Workshop cleansed	...	...	...	...	1
Piggeries repaired as per Bye-laws	...	...	...	...	2
Well under House emptied and filled in	...	...	...	...	1
Water Supply provided	...	...	...	...	12
Houses repaired under Housing Working Classes Act	...	...	...	...	4
Houses closed	„	„	...	...	4
Sanitary Conveniences repaired	...	...	...	...	25
Total					375

NUISANCES ABATED AS PER NOTICES SERVED.

To re-construct Water-Closets, repair Trap and ventilate Drainage	...	...	...	...	57
„ Empty or cleanse Cesspools	...	...	...	...	74
„ Repair Dwelling Houses	...	...	...	...	9
„ Provide Drainage	...	...	...	...	12
„ Repair Paving of Yards	...	...	...	...	36
„ Provide New Receptacles for Ash Closets	...	...	...	...	8
„ Remove Manure, House Refuse, Garbage and Filth from premises	...	...	...	...	57
„ Comply with Nuisance Bye-Laws	...	...	...	...	5
„ Cleanse Privies (for adopting Ash-Closet System)	...	...	...	...	8
„ Repair Sanitary Conveniences, Ash-Closets, and Privy Cesspits	...	...	...	...	57
„ Empty Privy Cesspits	...	...	...	...	25
„ Open up Drains for Inspection—Sec 41 Public Health Act	...	...	...	...	14
„ Deodorise Blood Heap	...	...	...	...	1
„ Cleanse Foul Ditches or Water Courses, including rear of Melville Road	...	...	...	...	41
„ Cleanse Cellar under Dwelling-house	...	...	...	...	1
„ Cleanse and repair Workshops	...	...	...	...	2
„ Fill in Well under Dwelling-house	...	...	...	...	1
„ Provide Water Supply	...	...	...	...	5
Total				...	413

SUMMARY OF SANITARY INSPECTOR'S VISITS DURING 1898.

Purpose of Visits.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
To Visits <i>re</i> Sanitary matters	55	19	18	41	28	17	37	20	30	19	25	16	326
„ Inspection of Nuisances and attending to Complaints	51	82	35	97	90	167	117	125	69	105	106	53	1039
„ Inspection of Cowsheds and Dairies ...	12	12	6	9	11	10	10	7	27	5	13	3	125
„ „ Common Lodging Houses ...	9	12	6	12	12	3	4	7	12	10	12	12	111
„ „ Slaughter Houses	10	17	3	25	23	...	22	14	16	15	20	15	180
„ „ Marine Stores	6	4	...	1	6	1	...	5	4	...	1	2	30
„ „ Workshops and Bakehouses	4	6	3	7	6	14	4	8	6	...	16	9	83
„ „ Piggeries <i>re</i> Nuis. Bye-laws	10	3	...	10	2	4	4	27	14	24	2	3	103
„ „ Houses under the Housing of Working Classes Act, 1890	...	28	...	9	13	...	...	19	...	19	11	10	109
„ Inspection of Fried Fish Shops ... ..	...	...	...	11	...	...	5	6	...	...	2	4	28
Grand Total	157	183	71	222	191	156	203	238	178	197	211	127	2134

Houses Disinfected, 79.

Drains Tested, 61.

